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ABSTRACT

Historical antecedents as well as contemporary social and cultural factors have impeded the Black student's quest for excellence in education. As a result, the historically Black colleges have, since their inception, existed to provide a quality education to those who have been excluded from the educational mainstream. Now that the focus of academia is on recapturing excellence in education while dealing with budgetary restraints, Black academic libraries, which have a long history of "making do and pursuing excellence," may serve as role models. Jackson State University's Henry T. Sampson Memorial Library, for example, promotes excellence with the following "action-oriented programs": bibliographic instruction; the Great Books Reading Forum; Project LAMP; Wonderful Wednesday; the FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education) Pilot Project; and the Science Technology Students Workshop. The Sampson Library also pursues an active collection development program; conducts outreach programs such as "The Afro-American Heritage--Viewing the Past from Mississippi," "Gowdy--Cherishing the Heritage," library programs for Upward Bound students, and the Pre-Science Major Enhancement Program; and strives to extend special services to a broad segment of students. In the future, the Sampson Library hopes to expand its teaching role in areas such as freshman orientation, the honors program, and continuing education. (KM)

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HENRY T. SAMPSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: LIBRARIES FACILITATING LEARNING FOR MINORITY STUDENTS

LIBRARIES AND THE SEARCH FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

A National Symposium Sponsored by Columbia University and the University of Colorado

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January 5, 1987

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EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION:

Libraries Facilitating Learning for Minority Students

An alarm has been sounded across the country, warning of the impending crisis that will confront the American educational system. At the outset that alarm emanated from a single source - A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (Gardner et al., 1983). At the center of this report was the conclusion that American education has been permeated by mediocrity, thus permitting an educational system that had served as a model for the world, to become severly diminished. Indeed, as the report states, "We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilaterial educational disarmament" (Gardner et al., 1983, p. 5.)

It would be difficult to imagine a single report that has generated the degree of commentary prompted by A Nation at Risk. Over seven hundred newspaper articles pertaining to the report were published in the four months after its release. Education in general and the report in particular were reviewed by virtually every major magazine in the country, while most news and public affairs programs on television, local as well as national, devoted special segments to the report and the state of education (U.S. Department of Education, 1984, pp. 13-14). The education reform movement had captured the attention and conscience of the American public and had provoked not mere discussion, but subsequent investigations, research and reports. A Nation at Risk focused primarily on perceived weaknesses in the secondary educational system, but following that report, other commissions and research groups released their findings and evaluations of American

education from the preschool to the college level. Chief among the studies that have concentrated on higher education are: 1) Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education (Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984); 2) To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education (Bennett, 1984); 3) Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community (Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees, 1985); 4) Higher Education and the American Resurgence (Newman, 1985); and 5) To Secure the Blessings of Liberty (Bell, 1986). While each of the above reports was prepared from slightly different perspectives, there is a similarity of thought pervading each. The basic assumption of each report is that American higher education is failing in its effort to educate the public. In failing to educate its constituents, higher education will effectively prohibit an unacceptably large percentage of Americans from full participation in society.

All of the major education reform reports cited previously have called for various remedies to reverse the condition of education, and in so doing have identified corrective measures that call upon the combined skill, imagination, and energy of parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, authors of textbooks, government officials and legislators. Noticeably lacking in all of the reports, save one, is the role that the librarian will play in education reform. It is not, however, the purpose of this paper to belabor the issue of why the library was excluded from the majority of these reports. Rather, this paper proposes to explore how academic libraries can facilitate excellence in education for the minority student, and how one academic library in particular, Jackson State University's H. T. Sampson Library, contributes to and enhances the learning environment of a historically black institution of higher learning.

What the Reports Say

Paralleling A Nation at Risk, the reports exploring higher education detail some alarming trends - decreases in the scores of Scholastic Aptitude Tests and American College Testing; the numbers of college graduates who lack basic communications skills and the proliferation of remedial programs provided by business and industry to rectify those deficiencies (Project on Redefining, 1985, p. 11); a high school drop out rate that is approaching twenty-five percent; at least fifty million households in which no member of the family has a bachelors degree, with that number increasing yearly (Bell, 1986, p. 29); and a functional illiteracy rate among adult citizens that stands at twenty-three million (Gardner et al., 1983, p. 8).

While such reports portend calamity for the entire spectrum of American youth, minority youth are identified as facing even greater consequences due to deficiencies in the educational system. As evidence, at least thirteen percent of American youth have been judged to be functionally illiterate, among minority teenagers the functional illiteracy rate rises to forty percent (Gardner et al., 1983, p. 8). Indeed, in a study conducted in 1985 it was determined that the average reading proficiency of seventeen year old black students was just slightly higher than the proficiences of thirteen year old white students. Moreover, it was also indicated by this study that only twenty percent of black seventeen year olds had sufficient reading proficiencies to engage in college level work. For black seventeen year olds in the South, that percentage dropped to seventeen percent (Marks, 1985, p. 17). Nationwide, high school dropout rates exceed twenty-five percent of the student population. In disadvantaged urban settings, the drop out rate for minority students may

approach forty to fifty percent (Bell, 1986, p. 29). Since the decade of the sixties, during which black enrollments at colleges and universities increased eighty-five percent, the percentage of black youth attending college has steadily declined (Lassiter, 1983, p. 1).

To complicate matters further, not only are Blacks entering college in decreasing numbers, but sufficient numbers of Blacks and other minorities are not entering college programs that would lead to degrees in engineering, business, law and medicine. The vast majority of students pursuing professional degrees have, in the past, been middle class whites. Estimates indicate that this same group of students will decline by thirty-five percent during the next ten years, while the numbers of minority youth will increase. Thus, if minority enrollments in professional degree programs do not increase, minorities will be prevented from securing top level jobs. Whites (and Asian-Americans as well) will control an even greater disproportionate share of the professions, while minorities will be delegated to lower level, menial employment. As the Carnegie Foundation states, "such a society will not work" (Newman, 1985, p. 5).

Factors Influencing the Decline in Black Education

Some thirty years have elapsed since the passage of the landmark legislation, Brown v. the Board of Education (1954) that put an end to segregated education and yet, the scholastic attainments of black students have not reached parity with their white counterparts. Historical antecedents, as well as several contemporary social and cultural factors have been identified as the impediment confronting the black student's quest for excellence in education.

Separate but Equal Doctrine

Until 1954, Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) was the law of the land and Blacks were entitled to receive an education from the state that was indeed separate, but hardly equal to education being afforded white students. Black public schools were universally underfunded, underequipped, and understaffed. A review of education statistics for Mississippi graphically illustratesthe inequities that were perpetrated upon black school children. In 1916 the per capita cost of educating white children in Mississippi was $10.60 per pupil, while the per capita cost for each black student was $2.26. Twenty-three years later, for every $9.88 spent on education for whites, only $1.00 was expended upon education for Blacks. For that same academic year (1939) Mississippi had 379,303 white school age children; a white enrollment of 308,883; 9,575 white teachers and a school year that lasted from eight to nine months. Black school age children in 1939 numbered 464,387; had an enrollment of 299,847; were taught by 5,930 teachers; and attended school for six months (Wilson, 1974, p. 51). Federal funds provided for education in Mississippi followed similar patterns of disbursement. During 1935 and 1937, the PWA and WPA distributed monies for the construction of school buildings, with $8,000,000 being used for white schools, and $400,000 expended upon black schools (Wilson, 1974, p. 55). Funding for higher education in Mississippi showed even greater degrees of mal-apportionment among black and white schools. In 1941 state funding for white schools was $1,500,000, while black schools were allocated $50,000. Thus, for every $30.00 spent on post-secondary education for whites, Mississippi chose to invest only $1.00 on the higher education of its black citizens (Wilson, 1974, p. 592).

Vocationalism

A massive debate, as to the proper course of study that Blacks should pursue, was waged during the early decades of the Twentieth Century. Southern states overwhelmingly endorsed the position taken by Booker T. Washington that blacks were best suited to vocational endeavors, and as a result the great number of black colleges became, in essence, "nonintellectual institutions" (J. Fleming, 1985, p. 6). The forces that were opposed to the vocationalization of black education were led by W. E. B. DuBois. College was viewed by DuBois as "the true founding stone of all education" (DuBoise, 1973, p. 3) and throughout his long career advocated that Blacks would be best served in pursuing a liberal arts education. Paradoxically, contemporary education reformers are echoing the contention of DuBois that "the education that trains men simply for earning a living is not education" (DuBois, 1973, p. 115). To many, the college undergraduate curriculum has become so muddled, so lacking in definition that it is not clear if the curriculum is "an invitation to philosophic and intellectual growth or a quick exposure to the skills of a particular vocation" (Project on Redefining, 1985, p. 2).

In spite of the obstacles to education just enumerated, Blacks did, however, make significant scholastic advances. In the thirty-five years separating 1895 and 1930, the illiteracy rate among Blacks was reduced from sixty percent to twenty-five percent, while enrollments in colleges had increased by 18,000 students (DuBois, 1973, p. 65). Why then has black education failed to meet the progress that was anticipated in the wake of Brown v. the Board of Education (1954)?

Financial Assistance

The need for financial assistance exists among black students. It is estimated that minority students require financial aid to cover at least eighty percent of their educational expenses (Lassiter, 1983, p. 4). While the numbers of college age black youth have increased, monies available for student aid has decreased. When this decrease in financial aid is coupled with inflation and the increase in the cost of education the purchasing power of student aid has been reduced by twenty-five percent within the past five years (Bell, 1986), p. 33).

Academic Preparation

Frequently cited among the factors influencing black success in higher education is the degree to which the student is academically prepared to enter college. Far too often black students are scholastically ill-equipped to embark upon a college career. Statistically a greater number of black students in secondary schools pursue a vocational/technical program rather than an academic curriculum (Marks, 1985, p. 16). To assess competencies in reading, science and mathematics, the National Center for Educational Statistics administered tests to high school students in their sophomore year (1980) and in their senior year (1982). Black students scored consistently lower on all tests as well as exhibiting the least improvement when re-tested in the senior year. Not surprisingly, test results indicated that students enrolled in academic curricula had the highest test scores and had made greater improvement by the time the second test was administered (National Center for Education Statistics, pp. 54-60).

Family Support and Academic Rewards

Aside from the various degrees of racism encountered by all blacks in this country, part of the problems facing black students stem from a lack of motivation and the absence of an active support group. While failure to be motivated by the educational process is hardly a phenomenon reserved exclusively for black students, this groups' lack of motivation is, however, engendered by unique circumstances.

Although deplorable, it has nevertheless been proven "that whites get greater rewards for any given amount of schooling than non-whites" (Weis, 1985, p. 135). Might this, in part, explain the high drop out rates of minority students? Further, many Blacks believe that society has lost interest in securing educational opportunities for minorities, and that the recent calls for excellence in education are not too thinly disguised means of keeping greater numbers of black students outside the educational system (Marks, 9185, p. 2).

The contention is made that white students persist in academic endeavors because they, unlike their black counterparts, have access to a large support network within their communities. "The banker, business owner, lawyer, doctor and government official all live in the white student's neighborhood..." and "provide a network of assisting, informing, advising and motivating" (Lassiter, 1983, p. 6). One might ask, what proof exists to support the theory that motivation and psychological support has a positive influence upon a student's academic accomplishments? Recently a new ethnic group began immigrating to America. Although encumbered by poverty, racism, minimal prior education and a language barrier, Asian-American students have outdistanced their

white and other ethnic peers in class standings, scores on nationally administered tests, and academic honors. These educational successes have been achieved, it is believed, because Asian-American students receive strong support from their families and ethnic group, posses self-confidence in succeeding, and are sufficiently motivated to devote the time required to attain excellence in education (Alexander and Royster, 1984, p. 200). It must be concluded, therefore, that psychological factors exert a potent influence on the outcome of a student's education.

Academic Library Services and the Minority Student

Until the late 1960's, institutions of higher learning served a very homogenous clientele - a cadre of students who came from similar cultural and social backgrounds, had similar academic preparation, and possessed similar scholastic abilities and skills. As a result of national legislation, higher education became accessible to a more diverse and greater proportion of the American public. Schools, and all their ancilliary agencies including the library, conducted a major re-orientation as they geared themselves to serve the students of "open admissions." In this respect, the historically black institutions had a head start on their academic colleagues as the black schools have always practiced an open admissions policy of sorts. Indeed, since their inception, the historically black college has existed to provide a quality education to those who have been excluded from the educational mainstream.

The function and purpose of the historically black academic library parallels its white counterpart, "however, over the century of their

existence, black institutions have added to their traditional functions the responsibility of educating a race long deprived of excellence in educational pursuits. Perhaps the major contribution of black academic librarianship is in this area of 'making do' and pursuing excellence" (C. L. Jordan, 1975, p. 149). Now that the focus of academia is to re-capture "excellence in education," while similtaneously struggling against severe budgetary declines, the libraries of the historically black institutions may perhaps serve as role models.

Goals and Objectives of the Academic Library

It is possibly a case of stating the obvious, but any program developed by an academic library must advance and implement the goals and objectives of the parent institution. Truly, all segments of the university must follow a common course of action that will advance the mission of the school. Furthermore, it is believed that the academic library has an opportunity, unrivaled by even the academic departments, to clarify and implement the goals and objectives of the institution (K. H. Jordan, 1980, p. 15). Therefore, serving as the framework and foundation of every program developed by the H. T. Sampson Library is the commitment -

> to provide for the needs of the students of the students in aspects of education: general, liberal, and professional...to guide students in developing the knowledge, skills, appreciation and attitudes which are essential to an education...with a special mission to provide educational opportunities for needy and disadvantaged students from both urban and rural environments (Jackson State University, 1985, p. 28).

E. J. Josey admonishes that if the academic library is to have a favorable impact upon the minority student, "it must become a teaching agency offering aid to the disadvantaged with action oriented programs" (Josey, 1971, p. 442). It is in teaching, research and service that transforms and expands the role of the library into one of a teaching library (Stoffle, Guskin and Boisse, 1984, p. 5). As a teaching library, the H. T. Sampson Library has exerted its influence in promoting excellence with the following "action oriented programs."

Bibliographic Instruction

Of the options available to the library for implementing the above mission, Bibliographic Instruction dominates the greater proportion of the library's activities. That teaching occupies the major focus of the professional staff of the H. T. Sampson Library is only natural and lends credence to the assertion that, "the librarian must be considered an educator as well as a librarian" (Libraries and a Learning Society, 1984, p. 4). The concept of bibliographic instruction is not new nor is it an innovation designed to respond to the educational reform movement. Various theories of library instruction have existed since the nineteenth century (Lynch and Seibert, 1980, p. 127). Since the 1970s, the term bibliographic instruction has been used to describe methods to increase student's competencies in conducting library research. This Library's support of bibliographic instruction can perhaps be explained by two factors - 1) the information explosion and 2) minority students frequently lack the libraryskills required to succeed in higher education.

Statistics corroborate the assertion that we are in the midst of an information explosion. In the United States, scholarly book publications have risen by 12,000 volumes within the past twenty years, while for that same period in worldwide publishing, the number of new books has more than doubled and scientific and technical serials have been increased by over 30,000 new titles (Walton, 1982, p. 184). By sheer volume alone, accessing information is, at times, a challenge for even the experienced researcher. When combined with the diverse and still developing formats from which information may be retrieved, access to information can become a frustrating exercise in futility for the unskilled library user. The only solution to this problem, as one educator recommends, is a "systematic and sustained" bibliographic instruction program. Moreover, this educator believes that successful information manipulation and retrieval will be "high level technical skills" that students will have to master in order to do well in college. In addition, it is believed that the next century will see library skills courses becoming a part of the required curriculum and library tutorial programs being developed for faculty (Hendrick, 1986, p. 128).

Gaining mastery over information is essential for success in contemporary society and it is the minority student who is most often the "information poor" (K. H. Jordan, 1980, p. 18). Most often the minority student is the individual who encounters the greatest difficulty in handling information and yet, it is the minority student who has the most to gain from information. Frequently, detractors claim that library instruction programs do not work, that students' library skills are not improved, nor are their academic standings raised as a result of bibliographic instruction.

Studies have been conducted and have validated the contention that bibliographic instruction programs do have a positive influence on students' educational pursuits. Moreover, both Breivik and Suarez report the success of bibliographic instruction programs within minority student populations (Breivik, 1977 and Suarez, 1985).

Thus, the H. T. Sampson Library is dedicated to a strong bibliographic instruction program and has long advocated the concept of the teaching library, believing as does Wedgeworth that "the library could again play an important role in the lives of our minority population, applying what James Baldwin so aptly called the 'lever' into a world of hope and accomplishment" (Wedgeworth, 1981, p. 96. In addition to pursuing "standard" models of bibliographic instruction, i.e., general library orientations, basic skills courses and advanced discipline oriented skills courses, the Library has also initiated several unique programs to advance library competency and fulfill the objectives of a teaching library.

Great Books Reading Forum. One of the earliest of the teaching library programs, the Great Books Reading Forum was a collaboration between the Library and two humanities scholars. The basic premise of this program was to expose the student to the works of the great writers and thinkers and in the process increase the students' involvement in library use and develop their ability to analyze and assimilate knowledge.

Project LAMP. With funding provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Council on Library Resources, Project LAMP was a

six year, innovative library-oriented teaching program in the humanities. Cited by Marshall as a model library instruction program (Marshall, 1977, p. 54), the Project endeavored to widen the learning experiences of the student through a greater use of library resurces; to stimulate creative and independent learning; and to make students and teachers more cognizant and reliant on library resources (Jackson State University. H. T. Sampson Library, 1975, p. 4). Among the devices employed to accomplish the above goals were bibliographic instruction and counseling; the creation of pathfinders, handbooks and bibliographies; book reviews; lecture/demonstrations; and various symposia. Guest lecturers for the Project included CBS correspondent Ed Bradley, renowned artist Elton Fax, and librarian Virginia Lacy Jones.

Wonderful Wednesday. One component of Project LAMP, Wonderful Wednesday closely resembled the type of Library Arts College envisioned by Louis Shores. With administrative approval classes were suspended or limited on Wednesday for one semester. On this day, the library became the classroom, and librarians were the teachers as students conducted research, completed class assignments, or pursued recreational reading.

FIPSE Pilot Project. The Atlanta University School of Library and Information Studies instituted a pilot project to enhance the bibliographic instruction expertise of librarians at seventeen historically black institutions. This project, supported by the Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), is being conducted over a three year period and is designed to optimize bibliographic instruction through the application of computerized modules. Jackson State University students and personnel are indeed fortunate that one of the H. T. Sampson Library's professional staff was selected to participate in this program and further refine reference assistance skills.

Science Technology Students Workshop. The students pursuing degrees within the science and technology disciplines have far less exposure to the library than do their peers majoring in the social sciences and humanities. As a result, the library skills of science and technology students are often poorly developed. One professional staff member has served internships at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, Berkeley, California, and at the Los Alamos Research, New Mexico. Contacts made by this librarian during the internships led to the creation of the Science Technology Students Seminar. To date, two seminars have been held that have employed the expertise of consultants on loan from each of the research facilities. Typically, the seminars include an overview of subject resources and online database searching capabilities. The chief focus of the seminars has been to impress upon the students the necessity of being able to conduct independent research, not only in the laboratory, but in the literature of the discipline as well.

Resources

Any quality academic library program designed for the minority student must include resources that support the general curriculum as well as resources that are relevant to and reflective of that student's cultural background (Young, 1976, p. 24). Again in this respect, the historically black institutions have been pathfinders and have amassed a wealth of information by and about the Afro-American. Both Smith and Jordan cite the immeasurable contributions made by the historically black academic libraries in preserving the heritage of black Americans (Smith, 1970, p. 201 and C. L. Jordan, 1975, p. 149).

The H. T. Sampson Library has long subscribed to an active collection development program of Afro-Americans. The major impetus for this

Library's Afro-American collection was provided by its immediate past Director, who in 1947 expanded and refined the collection with the expertise gained while a member of the famed Schomberg Collection staff. Currently the Afro-American holdings of Jackson State University include many first edition copies, original manuscripts, art works, oral history recordings and transcripts, as well as other audio and video recordings. The Library has created a total learning environment for the minority student by providing access to a wide and varied general collection, and a collection that is of special significance to the black student. Josey perhaps states it best when advising that:

> an important source of self-confidence and racial pride will be found in books and resources which will give ethnic disadvantaged students an appreciation of their own and other ethnic and cultural heritages (Josey, 1971, p. 440).

Outreach Programs

One vital component of the teaching library involves a committment to dynamic outreach programs (Stoffle, Guskin and Boisse, 1984, pp. 5-6). Former Secretary of Education Bell stresses the importance of lifelong learning (Libraries and a Learning Society, 1984, p. iii). For this reason, programs aimed at the adult non-student population serve to strengthen the learning environment of which the University is a part. Similarly, Higher Education and the American Resurgence, advises that universities should form stronger links to the secondary schools as a means of improving minority education (Newman, 1985, p. 98). To these ends, the H. T. Sampson Library has been involved in sponsoring various outreach programs that include the following:

The Afro-American Heritage: Viewing the Past from Mississippi. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, this recently

concluded eighteen month program was developed to promote a greater awareness of and appreciation for the many contributions made by black Americans to the disciplines of art, music, literature and the social sciences. As it was a learning library project for the adult out-of-school population, study guides and subject bibliographies figured prominently. The opening program was devoted to the musical heritage of black Americans and was successful to the extent of inspiring the local educational television network to produce a program devoted to black and white gospel music in Mississippi. Preeminent scholars/artists presented under the auspices of the project included: Lerone Bennett, Elizabeth Catlett, Margaret Walker Alexander, Joyce Ladner; Lawrence D. Reddick, Jessie Carney Smith, Robert Wedgeworth and Edward Holley.

Gowdy - Cherishing the Heritage. In an effort to capture the history of a disappearing black community, this project was developed as a direct response to assist a history class' assignment to conduct research on Gowdy. With funding provided by the Mississippi Endowment for the Humanities and the Institution's Department of Development and Research, four librarians conducted oral history interviews with elderly and middle aged residents of Gowdy to discover the development and unique qualities of the community. The project was culminated by a public forum in which humanities scholars and life-long Gowdy residents explained the lessons to be learned from the past, as well as the contributions to society of one cohesive, educationally progressive black Mississippi community.

Library Program for Upward Bound Students. Jackson State University has participated for several years in the Upward Bound Program and has contributed significantly in the academic preparation of college bound minority students. These special summer programs have frequently

incorporated a library component into the curriculum, thus enhancing further the academic foundation of the student.

Pre-Science Major Enhancement Program. Another of Jackson State University's summer program aimed at the secondary school student is the Pre-Science Majors Enhancement Program. In this program the Library was extensively involved in the academic preparation of future science majors. One librarian met with two groups of students, twice weekly for the duration of the program, and taught an intensive library skills course in the science disciplines.

Special Services

On-line database searching is recognized as the research mode of the future and yet its cost make it prohibitive to a great number of students, particularly those students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The H. T. Sampson Library has sought out means to provide a more equitable access to online databases by means of securing free searching time. One librarian participated in the previously mentioned FIPSE Pilot Project. A component of this training project provides for a certain number of free database searches. Another librarian was able to provide free online searches for students as a part of the previously discussed Science Technology Students Workshop. Still one other librarian secured a grant from AT&T. In addition to receiving training in online database searching, the librarian also obtained funds to finance searches for students enrolled in computer science programs. With some imagination and perserverance it is possible to extend special services, even those that are fee-based, to a much broader segment of students.

Future Areas of Concern

The above discussion has highlighted some of the activities and services that the H. T. Sampson Library has employed to facilitate excellence in education. Clearly, however, there is more that this Library can do to increase the quality of the learning environment at Jackson State University. Some of the areas in which the teaching role of the Library should be expanded include:

Freshman Orientation

Part of the undergraduate curriculum requires that each freshman take an orientation class. Under the direction of the Department of Guidance and Counseling, orientation classes include such segments as an introduction to college life, the history and traditions of the school, career education and a library orientation component. While it is laudable that library instruction is part of this program, it is less than desirable that (in most instances) non-librarians are responsible for teaching library skills. Certainly the administration and faculty would not permit personnel to teach in an area without the proper training and credentials, and yet untrained faculty are being called upon to teach library skills. The library faculty should, therefore, exert the position that all library instruction be taught by those who possess the recognized expertise and credentials.

Honors Program

An honors program lends prestige to any institution, and Jackson State University has one that is flourishing and marked by quality. This Institution's Honors Program operates under the leadership of a capable Director and a designated honors faculty. It is commonly agreed that libraries and honors programs are ideally suited to one another. Therefore, it is obvious that an already excellent program could be strengthened

further if an honors librarian were added to its distinguished faculty.

Continuing Education

In an era of lifelong learning, this urban university's Department of Continuing Education play a role of increasing importance. The adult student who possesses only vague remnants of once pertinent library skills and who is unaware of or untrained in new information technologies will utilize the services and teaching of the library faculty to an unprecedented degree. Therefore, it is imperative that the Library forge stronger ties with the Department of Continuing Education to prepare in meeting the information needs of this expanding segment of the university population.

Conclusion

The world has embarked upon a new era, one that will be dominated by information. As one of the first to identify this period as being one of information, Naisbitt observes that, "the United States is rapidly shifting from a mass industrial society to an information society, and the final shift will be more profound than the nineteenth century shift from an agricultural to an industrial society." More importantly, he continues, there is "a powerful anomoly developing: as we move into a more and more literacy-intensive society, our schools are giving us an increasingly inferior product" (Naisbitt, 1981, p. 33). Mere literacy, however, will not be enough to ensure one's success in the decades ahead, for effective utilization of information will be realized only when one garners and develops the skills necessary to access and retrieve information. Indeed, information will exert such a tremendous force on society that the ability to access, extract and otherwise manipulate information will not remain the exclusive domain of the information professional, but will, by necessity, be prerequisite skills of the participants of this new age. Typically, minority

students are seen as the information poor and are identified as the group who would benefit most from information management skills. If not the librarian, who is better able to empower this group of students to gain mastery of information? The library facilitates educational excellence in many ways, but particularly through teaching students that one's knowledge is limited only by the ability to gain access to information. Thus, the librarian will equip the student to navigate the labyrinths of the information maze and, in the process, will unlatch the door to knowledge.

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